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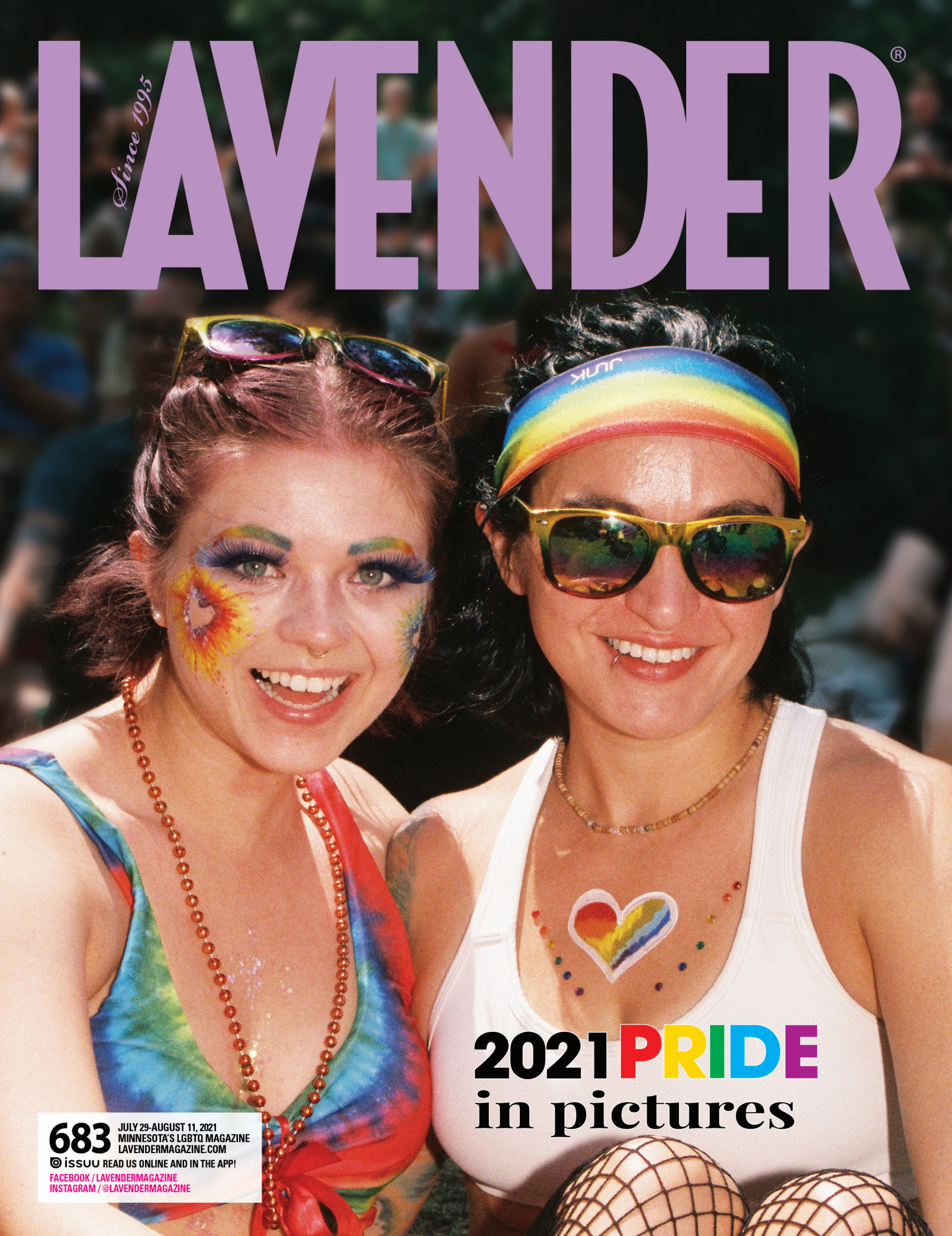

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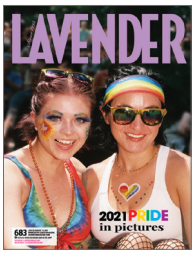

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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDREW STARK

Introductions and Salutations

Hello, friends.

I'd like to introduce myself as the new Managing Editor at *Lavender*, and I'm thrilled to be part of the family.

I grew up on a small Indian reservation in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. It's a grizzled, wild place—Ernest Hemingway's turf, Jim Harrison's (for the most accurate literary portrayal of the U.P., in my opinion, you can check out *Brown Dog*; there are no accurate cinematic portrayals). After high school, I earned a scholarship to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, but left after a year, seeking a more structured academic environment (not only was I a bad student, I despised Chicago). I finished my undergraduate career in Montana, and then earned my MFA out in Portland, OR.

After a stint back in Michigan, I moved to Los Angeles and worked as Deputy Editor for the international award-winning arts and culture publication *Flaunt*. This was an exciting opportunity for me, as I grew up reading that very magazine, picking up a copy whenever my mom and I would make the 30-mile drive to the nearest bookstore.

I then moved back here to be closer to my family. Since, I've held various soul-shattering corporate gigs, but have worked as a freelance writer all along, contributing to different magazines/media nationwide.

In terms of my writing, I've always been drawn to interesting, fun, strange and provocative subjects. I'm a very curious person, and I love meeting and learning about new people (recently, for example, I was having (amazing) cocktails at RockFilter Distillery down in Spring Grove, MN, and wound up chatting with this burly farmer for about three hours). My goal for *Lavender* is to transform—I want to showcase younger, edgier, more diverse members of the community. I want to feature interesting music and artists, chefs, entrepreneurs, filmmakers, poets, and so on, folx from all backgrounds and identities—BIPOC, Femme, Trans, Intersex, Non-Binary, Two-Spirit, Allies, everybody. I want to get to know you.

That being said, I welcome pitches in the aforementioned vein: I love learning about interesting people doing cool stuff. I want to be accessible to our readers, and you can reach me at andrew@lavendermagazine.com.

In my spare time, I like to write. I'm currently working on a collection of literary horror stories, as well as a sort of dissertation on masculinity. I love to read. I love music, and welcome suggestions anytime (for new stuff, I'm loving Indigo Sparke, Maple Glider, Park Hye Jin, Thom Yorke's eerie and symphonic rework of "Creep"—but my mainstays are acts like Grouper and Timber Timbre). I also love watching movies, cooking, hiking and camping with my dogs (Gizmo, a Chihuahua, and Barney, a Chiweenie), and generally exploring the far reaches of Minnesota and beyond.

Anyway, feel free to reach out and say hello. I'd love to hear from you.We have an exciting journey ahead of us, and we're in this together. Cheers. ▮

—Andrew Stark

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Neanderthals: The First Old Boy Clubs

In the early days of space flight, young women also wanted to become astronauts, but it was white guys only. Dr. William Randolph Lovelace II, who had selected the initial all-male group, remained curious to see how well women could perform the same rigorous tests, so he formed Mercury 13.

Of 25 applicants, all trained pilots, Lovelace chose 13, including 22-year-old Mary Wallace (Wally) Funk. Between 1960 and 1962, they underwent batteries of grueling tests. Funk, placed in a sensory deprivation tank (no light, no sound), was pulled out after 10 hours and 35 minutes; not at her request, but because she seemed likely to remain indefinitely. "I think they were thinking I was going to hallucinate," she remarked later, "but I didn't."

Unlike the men, Margaret Weitekamp pointed out in a recent CNET interview that the women were tested singly or in pairs; never as a group, never able to form bonds or face difficulties with support. "The 13 didn't just meet the men's standards," she added, "they passed with flying colors."

The program was shut then down, despite their stellar performance. Sexism in the '60s? Men fearing being bested by women? John Glenn comparing female astronauts to "my mother trying out for a football team"? A NASA official's declaration, "Women astronauts would be a waste in space, a luxury the United States space effort cannot afford"? Women were not admitted to US space until 1978 (Sally Ride); the first African-American in 1983 (Guy Bluford).

Nothing new. On May 24, 1936, military bands played and 3,000 rallied to see Akron, Ohio's MacNolia Cox off at Capitol Station. The 13-year-old had qualified for the annual National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C., and was accompanied by Mabel Norris, a 21-year-old reporter for the *Akron Beacon Journal*, her mother, Ladybird, and her white teacher, Cordelia Greve. The Coxes were Black.

Only when arriving at the Hamilton Hotel for the contestants' banquet the night before the Bee, did MacNolia question why they had to enter by the back door, traipse through the kitchen and up the back stairs to a two-seat table sequestered from the others.

But she held her own in the National Museum Auditorium on May 26, even spelling words not in her dictionary. Then, down to five, she was given "Nemesis"; not only not in her dictionary, but the capitalized name of a Greek goddess, a proper noun not allowed in the contest. When she misspelled, Norris argued to a national audience on CBS, asserting the judges were uncomfortable with a Black winner and were discriminating against Cox. They denied, and MacNolia was out; offered no replacement word legal by their own rules.

Out. But not forgotten. On the National Bee Stage this July 8, 14-year-old Zaila Avant-garde paused, as she later told reporters, to remember MacNolia's anguish, then spelled the winning word, "murraya,' to become the first African-American to win the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

"Remember": a powerful and therapeutic word. Stay mindful of those gone before, especially the thwarted. Wally Funk, now 82, was chosen—shrewd ploy or flicker of humanitarianism?—to lift off with Jeff Bezos on his Blue Origin craft New Shepard. She will finally fly, finally experience four minutes of weightlessness. She feels "fabulous," exulting, "And I am going to love every second of it. I can't wait!" ∎

COMMUNITY | BY DALE FITZGERALD

Don't Call It a Comeback: The Return of Lavender's First Thursdays

Lavender's first First Thursday happened back in early February 2008. Considering that this was the theoretical birth of First Thursdays, it holds that First Thursday is an Aquarius: assertive, eccentric, visionary, kinetic. In other words, First Thursday takes its good times seriously.

A handful of years ago, then, our beloved First Thursdays began as a celebration of community and inclusion under the half-guise of a laid-back happy hour. But if we know Aquarians, that laid-back happy hour was serious business—laced with a mission of unity, of exultation, both a gathering of like-minded individuals and a single loving energy. Thus, First Thursdays have continued in this way.

And then the pandemic hit. Friendly neighborhood soirées were forced into hibernation.

Now *Lavender* is thrilled to announce the triumphant return of First Thursdays! We're baaaaaack, baby. But we're not alone: Our wonderful friends at Ma'am, the gathering space/social club for 40+ lesbian women, will join us in hosting our 147th First Thursday!

Ma'am, founded by longtime friends Beth Mejia and Kate McFarland, provides a fun, safe and welcoming networking and social space that doesn't otherwise exist. "Basically, that's what Ma'am is all about," says Mejia. "We're a group of older women, we really don't have a bar scene out here, we want to socialize, we want to network. So we get together on a monthly basis and just create events for our women in our community." She adds: "Everybody's welcome."

The *Lavender* x Ma'am Return of First Thursdays will take place August 5, 2021, at the gloriously kitsched-out Park Tavern in nearby Saint Louis Park. The proceedings are from 5:30 – 8:00 PM. So we invite everyone to come as you are! The only requirement is to be yourself, because you're beautiful. Enjoy complimentary apps, drink specials and a chance at some fantastic prizes.

On collaborating more with *Lavender* in the future, Mejia says, "I would love that. I think it'd be excellent. I think it'd be a really great way to bring our whole community together, to support each other as we've gone through a really tough year—I think everybody's looking forward to getting together, and just hugging one another."

We'd love to thank our incredible sponsors, Truly Hard Seltzer and Tito's Vodka. Without you, Minnesota summers are just three weeks of hot weather.

So we look forward to seeing you at the Park Tavern on August 5, 2021 from 5:30 – 8:00 PM for the Return of Lavender's First Thursdays. Cheers!

For more information, visit www.lavendermagazine.com/lavenders-first-thursdays/ ∎

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GOLDEN VALLEY PRIDE FESTIVAL FOOD AND SUPPLY DRIVE FOR PRISM

June 12, 2021

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HASTINGS PRIDE PARADE

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YOUTH PRIDE 2021

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TWIN CITIES PRIDE FAMILY FUN DAY

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MINNESOTA UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB PRIDE MATCH

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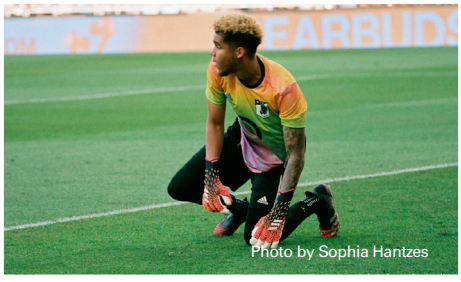
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WNBA MINNESOTA LYNX PRIDE GAME

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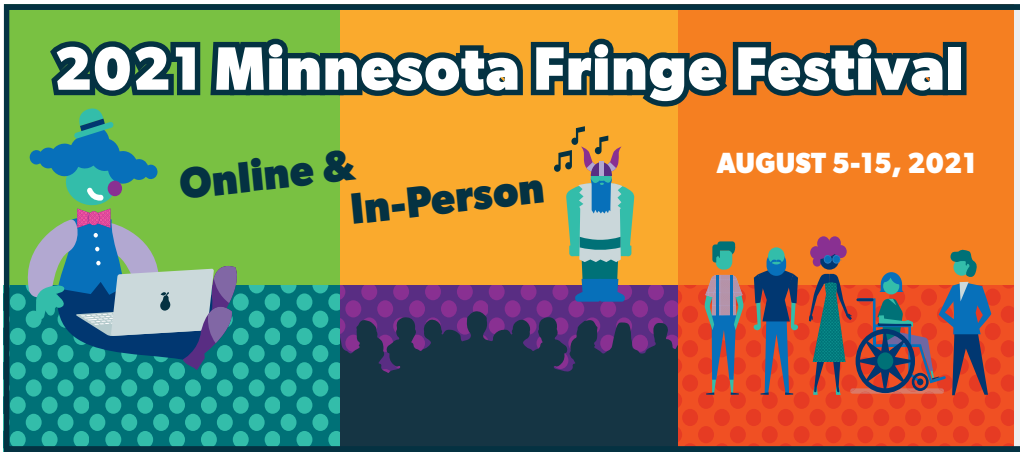

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GRRRL SCOUT 2021 PRIDE BLOQ PARTY

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MAPLE GROVE PRIDE AND COLOR COMMUNITY GATHERING

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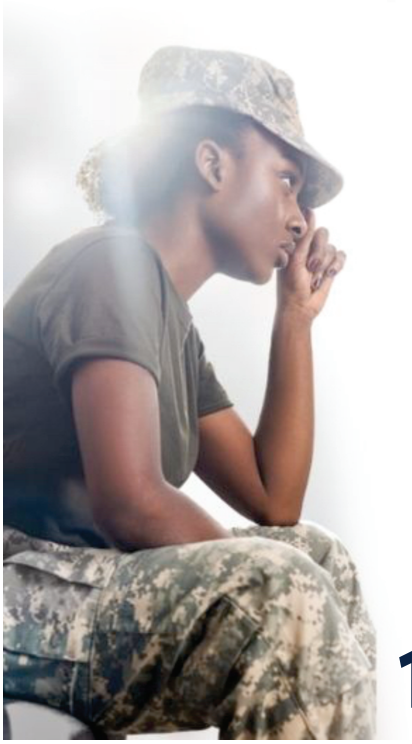

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TAKING BACK PRIDE 2021

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TWIN CITIES PRIDE 2021 RAINBOW RUN 5K

June 27, 2021

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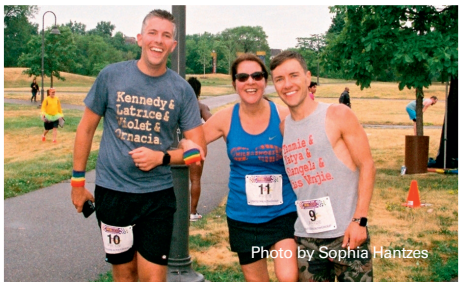

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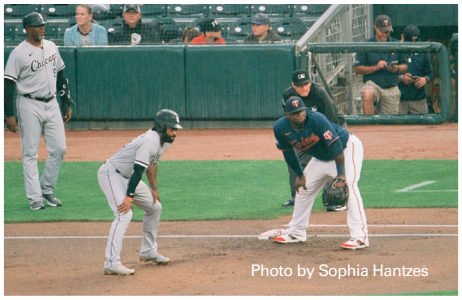
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MINNESOTA TWINS PRIDE NIGHT

July 6, 2021

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PRIDE GRAND MARSHAL MASKQUEERADE: UNMASKED

July 8, 2021

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

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Pride Comes in all Colors of the Rainbow

Pride may have taken on a slightly different look this year, thanks to the pandemic of 2020 shaking things up, but one thing remains the same—Pride is shown in all shades of the rainbow, and people of color make up a huge part of that diverse and beautiful spectrum.

While many people of color enjoy the traditional Twin Cities Pride festivities as much as anyone, the Minnesota People of Color LGBTQ Pride Organization also goes all out to put on a Pride to celebrate in their own unique way by offering the community a "S.L.I.C.E." of Pride, which stands for "Sociability", "Literary", "Inclusion" "Charity" and "Education." These are the building blocks for a stronger, more empowered, and more well-informed community.

The Twin Cities Black Pride Festival, which runs August 12 – 15, 2021, will include vendors, organizations, booths, tables and sponsors that will encompass a broad range of interests, groups and allies that will honor and recognize the fellowship of groups that make up this amazing community.

Some of the events include the following:

MN BLACK PRIDE KICK OFF PARTY

Thursday, August 12 • 8 pm – Midnight • $5 entry fee • 21+

All are welcome to this kickoff party to be held at Hyde Kitchen & Grill, 24 University Ave. NE, Minneapolis. This event is sponsored by B and M Entertainment and the MN POC Pride Festival, and will feature music by DJ DIME, giveaways and drink specials.

THE MET GALA BALL (BLACK PRIDE EDITION)

Friday, August 13 • 8 pm – Midnight • Tickets $39.99–$300 (available on Eventbrite)

An evening of elegance and style will fill the Ramada Inn Plymouth (2705 Annapolis Ln, N., Minneapolis, MN 55441) as host Adonis Escada leads the festivities, and DJ DIME provides the music. Doors open at 7:30 pm, and a VIP ticket includes no line standing, a meet & greet with a celebrity judge along with autograph and photo.

BLACK PRIDE ON THE RIVER 2021

Saturday, August 14 • 7:30 – 10 pm • Tickets $60 • Padelford Riverboats, Harriet Island, St. Paul

Come out and join the fun on the river with free food, a cash bar, live entertainers and a DJ to provide the beats. The boat will leave on time at 8 pm sharp, so be sure to arrive early to make sure you don't miss out!

GATHERING OF FRIENDS

Sunday, August 15 • 10 AM • Free

Come out and gather with others at Boom Island, 724 Sibley St. NE, Minneapolis for a day of fellowship, fun, and most of all….Pride!

For more information on these activities, as well as the mission statement of the Minnesota People of Color LGBTQ Pride Organization, visit www.mnpocpride.org ∎

2021 PRIDE in pictures

Photo by Andrew Bertke

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ATONS PRIDE SMOKER & SOCIAL EAGLEBOLTBAR

July 15, 2021

Photo by Andrew Bertke

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PRIDE BLOCK PARTY 2021 SALOON

July 16, 2021

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2021 PRIDE in pictures

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TWIN CITIES PRIDE FESTIVAL

July 17, 2021

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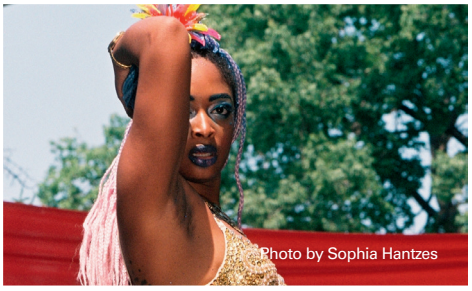
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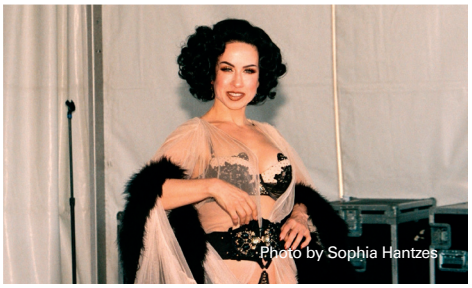
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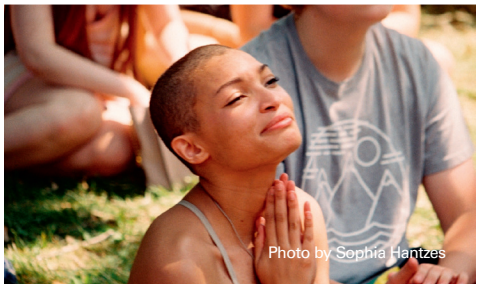
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A DAY in the Life

KELSEY GELHAUS, M.D.

Photos courtesy of Kelsey Gelhaus

Where did you grow up? Staples, a small town in central Minnesota.

Where do you live? In the country outside of North Branch, another small town 45 minutes north of the Twin Cities.

Who do you live with? My spouse, Nell; our boys—two-year-old Soren and four-year-old Leif; Tibby, our Corgi; two cats and about 20 chickens.

What is your occupation? I'm a practicing Obstetrician/Gynecologist as well as faculty for the University of MN, training OB/GYN residents and medical students.

When did you come out? Twenty-one years old.

How'd that go? Well, my coming out tactic was basically to bring home a girlfriend and see if anyone noticed. Honestly, my biggest hold-up in coming out was always the fear of disappointing my family, with whom I am very close. So it took a lot of personal soul-searching to come out. I have been incredibly blessed, as my family and friends have stood by me every step of the way.

When do you wake up? Between 5:00 and 6:00 AM, depending on if I am operating that day or not.

Phone alarm or old-school alarm? Phone alarm.

What's the first thing you do in the morning? I am usually trying to sneak in a shower before the two-year-old wakes up. He is still breastfeeding, so I get about 15 minutes to get ready before he comes looking for "mama milk!"

Breakfast? Always! Typically, fresh scrambled eggs courtesy of our chickens.

Coffee? Also, always.

Cream, or no? Yup, always this too.

How do you spend your commute? I usually drop off the boys for "school," so we spend our commute hunting for school buses, tractors, and construction trucks.

What do you nerd out for (gaming, music, history, etc.)? I nerd out for personal finance blogs and podcasts. American culture pushes consumerism and celebrates lives of unbridled debt. I found the financial independence movement about four years ago, and we are working hard to integrate minimalism and financial freedom in our lives with aggressive debt pay down and saving. We try to value experiences and relationships and not acquiring the coolest new "stuff." Though it is hard to keep Nell from acquiring more chickens!

What music have you been digging lately? Currently Jon Batiste has me dancing while folding laundry, but there hasn't been a day in 15 years that I haven't listened to Brandi Carlile.

Is your work space tidy or a hot mess? My workspace is probably somewhere between tidy and hot mess.

What's been your favorite job? My favorite job has absolutely been being an OB/GYN. Any given day I might be surgically removing endometriosis, delivering a baby, repairing prolapse or inseminating a same-sex couple. I am invited to so many incredibly intimate spaces with women and their bodies. It's such a privilege to care for women in this fashion.

Favorite weeknight meal: Go out, take-out, or cook in? Any meal my wife has prepared by the time I get home with the kids.

On a usual weeknight, you are doing what? We live on almost 40 acres of land, so we spend most of our nights outside with our kids doing animal chores, working in the garden, or riding four-wheelers. In the winter, we snowshoe and cross-country ski.

Bedtime? I usually end up crashing while putting my kids to bed between 8:00 and 8:30 PM.

Favorite weekend activity? We try to spend as much time as possible with grandparents and cousins. Our families love to play on the lakes—swimming, pontooning, tubing and fishing.

What are you most proud of, and why? My children. We are a two-mom family and we follow a respectful parenting philosophy, so everything we do is unconventional. It's been so rewarding to watch the boys grow into kind, confident, happy and fun-loving little humans with their own unique personalities. My wife's brother is our sperm donor and I carried our boys, so they look a little like both of us, but mostly my wife. Being their moms has truly made our dreams come true.

Words of wisdom to share: Getting outside is universally cathartic and has always been my answer when I feel stuck. Move your body in whatever way possible and get some fresh air. It cures so many ills. ∎

BY KASSIDY TARALA

PFunding the Community

LGBTQ+, BIPOC-owned businesses receive grants from the PFund Foundation each year. Here are some of this year's recipients.

For LGBTQ+ folx, community is everything. Of course, community looks different to everyone. It may mean friends to one person, relatives to another, or colleagues to another. But whoever we consider our immediate family, we all have one thing in common: a greater community made up of people in our area. It's the local coffee shop where we meet up with friends, or the little boutique that offers gender-inclusive clothing and friendly conversation. It's the bar where the staff know exactly what "the usual" means. It's the places where we spend our time, and it's the people who make these spaces feel like home.

The PFund Foundation knows how important community is to LGBTQ+ folx, which is why each year it awards grants to LGBTQ+, BIPOC businesses, volunteers and community leaders. Though this selection process typically looks the same each year, it's been a bit different in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the police murder of George Floyd.

"This review committee looked at the impact of COVID-19 and the protests that followed the murder of George Floyd on the business; a strong plan to utilize the funds; and the businesses' work in the community to determine which recipients would be awarded, as there were more applications than there were funds," says PFund Executive Director Aaron Zimmerman. "The requirements for this round of funding were that the business owner must be BIPOC and LGBTQ+, operating their business in Minneapolis, and impacted by COVID-19 and the protests following the murder of George Floyd."

PFund Foundation partnered with Quorum, Minnesota's LGBTQ+ and Allied Chamber of Commerce, to not only provide grants to each business to invest in their recuperation, but to provide additional wraparound support, including a membership to Quorum and monthly education sessions.

"PFund Foundation is a community foundation that must be responsive to the needs of our communities in order to have the greatest impact," Zimmerman says. "In these past 15 months, PFund has truly had to put this philosophy into action by investing in those most impacted by tragedy and injustice. We have developed amazing partnerships with other funders, community leaders and others to create some amazing funds for communities impacted. We partnered with local mental health professionals who provided stipends for individual/group mental health support and healing for leaders facing trauma before, during, and after the murder of George Floyd."

Additionally, Zimmerman explains that PFund's LGBTQ+ BIPOC Business Capacity Fund will be their focus in the coming years as they continue to see the need to invest in BIPOC communities.

"We are continuing to seek new ways to drive impact for the most marginalized communities within LGBTQ+ communities," he adds.

Among this year's recipients are Sammy's Avenue Eatery and Formation Healing Arts.

"Our mission is to continue to establish ourselves as a heart-healthy food and community establishment with great vibes," says Sammy McDowell, owner and operator of Sammy's Avenue Eatery in North Minneapolis. "We're very grateful to receive the PFund grant, which helped

us get through the tough times we all faced during the pandemic and the uprising. Rest in peace, George Floyd."

Sammy's, where you can snag one of the tastiest sandwiches in the Twin Cities, remains a local mainstay.

"It's very important for us to stay afloat amongst all that we have faced," McDowell adds, "because as people may or may not know, Black businesses have a greater challenge in securing financial support and city and state support, not because we're not great business operators, but simply because of the (beautiful) color of our skin. I would love for Minnesotans to intentionally continue to support all small businesses because we matter." McDowell adds: "Please forgo your normal chain establishments and support small businesses if you have the chance."

Like Sammy's, Formation Healing Arts is a staple of the community.

"Formation Healing Arts works for healing justice through supporting the restoration of healthy connections within our own systems, with the natural world, and other living beings through individual and collective holistic healing practices," says founder Anna Meyer.

Meyer explains that a grant from PFund provides Formation Healing Arts access to professional development in the areas of small business management, additional holistic health training and education, and professional associations. The funds also allow for holistic healing sessions to be financially accessible for community members by supporting an income-based sliding fee scale.

"George Floyd's murder brought attention to racism and systematic and systemic racism on a larger scale, but queer and trans communities of color have been experiencing these realities for generations," Meyer says. "The need for healing is more visible now but the need has always been there, and how we do our work is ever more important. Remembering ancestral ways of being and healing and restoring our health holistically—individual, collective, systemic, planetary—is central to our survival, healing and thriving."

With a new office in South Minneapolis, Formation Healing Arts offers individual Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy, Reiki, HearthMath techniques, training, and group holistic healing and facilitation support. ▮

LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS

Leather Pride Flag 101

June 26, 2021: A photo from the 2021 community photo shoot with the giant Leather Pride flag. Photo by Larry Barthel

Consider the Leather Pride flag: Nine stripes—four black, four blue, one white—with a red heart in the upper left corner. It's a nice-looking flag, yes. But the Leather Pride flag's importance, as with all flags, comes from the community it represents and the values it symbolizes. With that in mind, here are some basics both of the Leather Pride flag in general—and of Minnesota's supersized version of it.

Origins of the Leather Pride flag: The Leather Pride flag was designed by Anthony F. (Tony) DeBlase, a noted artist, writer, editor and publisher. DeBlase was involved with many leather/SM publications over many years, including Drummer Magazine.

DeBlase's idea for a Leather Pride flag was first presented to the community at the International Mr. Leather contest in Chicago on May 28, 1989. DeBlase intended the flag presented then as a "first draft," a starting point on the way to a final flag design created by community consensus. He was surprised when the community accepted and adopted the flag as it was presented, with no alterations or modifications. The way the flag was presented in 1989 is pretty much the way the flag has been seen, and flown, ever since.

Even though it's called a "Leather Pride" flag, it encompasses leather, levis, BDSM, uniforms, cowboys, latex, and every other fetish that is identified as part of the leather/ BDSM/fetish community. And just as the leather community includes all genders and sexual orientations, so the Leather Pride flag is not an exclusively gay symbol.

Symbolism of the Leather Pride flag: DeBlase, the flag's creator, has said he had no specific symbolism in mind when he designed the Leather Pride flag. He preferred that individuals or the community assign their own interpretation, symbolism and meanings to the flag. Over the years, this has happened.

One common symbolism attached to the Leather Pride flag is this: the black is for black leather; the blue is for blue denim; the white stripe

in the middle is for integrity; and the red heart symbolizes love. Other interpretations of the flag's white stripe include symbolizing purity, safety, and solidarity with novices in the BDSM scene. Other interpretations of the red heart include symbolizing respect, understanding, and consent.

Origins of Minnesota's giant Leather Pride flag: Minnesota's giant Leather Pride and rainbow flags made their first appearance in the annual Twin Cities Pride Parade on June 28, 1998. (Known for many years as the Ashley Rukes LGBT Pride Parade, the parade is now called the LGBTQ+ March.)

Every year since 1998, these giant flags have been a part of the parades because of the efforts of two gay leathermen, Colin Spriestersbach and Carl Gscheidmeier (also known as "Miss Allison Brooks," the legendary drag queen). In the late 1990s, both Spriestersbach and Gscheidmeier were members of the Black Guard of Minneapolis, and Spriestersbach was on the Pride board.

Spriestersbach originally asked Gscheidmeier about sewing a large rainbow flag to begin the Pride parade. Spriestersbach envisioned a large flag carried by one person. But Gscheidmeier proposed two giant flags—rainbow and Leather Pride—"curb-to-curb and a block long" to lead the parade.

That's exactly what ended up being created. Spriestersbach provided the materials, and Gscheidmeier spent three and a half months sewing both flags. According to Gscheidmeier, both flags were about 75 feet long and 50 feet wide. That made Minnesota's giant Leather Pride flag the largest such flag in existence.

The two giant flags were carried by community members at the beginning of every year's Pride parade until 2008, when the original Leather Pride flag was decommissioned in an elaborate pre-parade ceremony.. That original giant Leather Pride flag was sent to the Leather Archives and Museum in Chicago, where it is now the largest single item in their collection.

Minnesota's giant Pride flags, second edition: At the same ceremony in 2008 in which the original giant Leather Pride flag was decommissioned, a new giant Leather Pride flag was introduced. (A new giant rainbow flag was introduced the following year.) These two new giant flags appeared at the beginning of each year's Pride parade through 2019, the last Pride parade to date because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the end of each year's Pride parade, a tradition has evolved: taking a photograph of the giant Leather Pride flag, spread out on a lawn and surrounded by the people who just carried it in the parade. Even though there were no Pride parades in 2020 or 2021, the tradition of the Leather Pride flag photo shoot has continued—and has even been enhanced by the use of an aerial drone to take the photograph.

Shown in this article is one of the photographs from the 2021 Leather Pride flag photo shoot coordinated by the Minnesota Leather Pride organization. The photograph was taken June 26, 2021, in Theodore Wirth Park in Minneapolis.

Here's hoping Minnesota's two giant Pride flags will be able to make an appearance at the beginning of a Pride parade in 2022. When you see them, remember that they are in the parade because of the inspiration and actions of two gay leathermen, and the flags' continuing presence in the parade is also a testament to the Black Guard of Minneapolis. ▮

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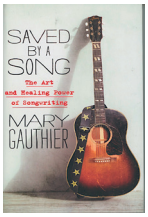
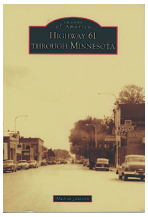
BOOKS | BY E.B. BOATNER



Saved by a Song: The Art and Healing Power of Songwriting

Mary Gauthier
St Martin's Essentials
$27.99

Not another "feel-good" story of addiction overcome, but an important "feel-truth" journey Gauthier has traveled and is passing on to help the legions dealing daily with inner chasms that can't be filled by coke or cash. Not a "Do this and…" volume, but histories, anecdotes that say, "Consider this." Entrenched hurts and rage emerge when couched in melody. Gauthier's lyric, "Old men sit and think / I drink," and "I know what I am / But I don't give a damn," is reduction to essence. Being given up at birth led to *The Foundling* album, while her work with damaged vets through non-profit SongwritingWith:Soldiers, to *Rifles and Rosary Beads*. Shamanic practitioners acknowledge soul loss and employ soul retrieval; Gauthier practices—and teaches—healing with song.

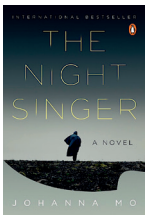


Highway 61 Through Minnesota

Nathan Johnson
Arcadia Publishing
$23.99

This multi-illustrated volume presents the highway's varied past and permutations from inception to the present. If you're looking for a summer road trip, Johnson, obviously an aficionado, has laid out a smorgasbord of choices for your delectation. Not every building imaged still stands, some towns are no more, but with maps and strategy you can plot a satisfying journey, and soak up history. Tobie's, for example, began as a Hinckley restaurant in 1920, moved near the freeway in 1966, and has now become world-famous for its massive caramel and cinnamon rolls. The town is still home to the Hinckley Fire Museum, chronicling the Great Hinckley Fire of 1894 that leveled a quarter-million acres and ended uncounted lives in four hours. Study the book, plan your route—go!

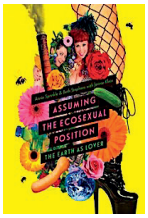
Footnote: Nathan Johnson is an employee of Lavender.



The Night Singer

Johanna Mo; Tr. Alice Menzies
Penguin
$17

Mo's earlier mysteries are well-known in Sweden, and her debut in English introduces Hanna Duncker and *The Island Murders* series. Facing the shame of her father's conviction for a gruesome arson/murder, Hanna returns after 16 years to Öland. Unlike her brother, Hanna kept the family name, still hateful to many villagers. After joining the police force, Hanna's first case involves the suspicious death of her former best friend's 15-year-old son. Ingenious plot twists, but Mo's aim is to illustrate trauma's devastation beyond perpetrator and victim, tightening the net through intercut chapters detailing characters, including the gender-conflicted victims themselves, *The Night Singer* is taut, complex and relentless.



Assuming the Ecosexual Position: The Earth as Lover

Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens with Jennie Klein
University of Minnesota Press
$29.95

If you prefer more mature lovers, try 4.543 billion years old. Starting on a more modest scale, Sprinkle and Stephens entered California's Domestic Partnership in 2003. Both had felt the pull of the Earth as youngsters, later participating in activities leading to the Love Art Lab (2005–2011), multiple marriages to Sun, Soil, Rock and others, including Earth. Ecosexual became a new gender ID, a performance art that can be rowdy and invigorating—or too much for some, but their valid questions remain. Where do we end and nature begins? Who am I? Who are we? Is there a "They" or just an "Us"? Their Green Marriage to Earth vows include the "Promise to love, honor, and cherish you, Earth, until death brings us closer together, forever." ▮

The Bucking Bronco Is Back!

A few years ago, Ford announced that it would bring back the Bronco name for a new off-road ready vehicle. What transpired afterwards was a series of spinning heads, fan forums, further announcements, and a lot of waiting.

The wait is over. Well, almost.

Just last year, Ford introduced not just one Bronco—but three. It would become a family of vehicles using that iconic name, which would eventually become its own sub-brand.

To understand why the Bronco name evoked such a large response from the motoring public, let me take you back some 55 years. In 1966, Ford introduced a light utility vehicle that was designed for recreation and exploration. The original Bronco was boxy compared to the Jeep CJ that Kaiser Industries produced, but similar to the International Scout. All three recreational utility vehicles would make their way on to farms, up in the Iron Range, parked by the lake, and anywhere else you can take it.

Ford kept making the versatile SUV until 1977, when it was transferred onto a shortened F-Series frame. No longer would the mighty Bronco match up with the Jeep CJ. It would take on the Chevrolet Blazer, Dodge Ramcharger, and Jeep Cherokee instead. The Bronco was bigger and thirstier, but it was even more brutish when it came to going off road.

When the smaller Ranger pickup truck came out in 1982, Ford planned on a smaller Bronco to be built off the same platform. The Bronco II was released with modern styling that was adopted from the Ranger. However, it could not match the Jeep CJ on the trails the way it was intended. It also had a tendency to tip over on a rare occasion, due to its higher center of gravity, small wheelbase and overall size.

Production of the Bronco II ended in 1990. The larger Bronco would continue to be produced until 1996. Ford went on to introduce a series of soft-roading SUVs that were primarily made for the street instead of the trail.

This year, the Bronco lineup began to arrive at Ford showrooms across the Upper Midwest. The first model was the Bronco Sport, a smaller SUV based on the Escape. It might not be the right basis for an off-road ready small SUV,

First generation Ford Bronco. Photo by Randy Stern.

2021 Ford Bronco Two-Door. Photo by Randy Stern.

2021 Ford Bronco Four-Door. Photo by Randy Stern.

2021 Ford Bronco Sport Badlands. Photo by Randy Stern.

but Ford did some further engineering and design to make it into a Bronco.

Bronco Sport customers have a choice of a turbocharged 1.5-liter three-cylinder engine or a turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine. The latter engine is connected to a sophisticated four-wheel drive system that includes a twin-clutch rear axle unit and an enhanced version of the Terrain Management System with G.O.A.T. (Goes Over Any Terrain) Modes.

By now, the first of the "real" Broncos should arrive into showrooms to fulfill the long waiting list for one. The so-called "real" Bronco is based on the same frame as the current Ranger pickup truck and is available in two- and four-door models. It was designed from the onset to directly compete with the Jeep Wrangler, but the Bronco will also have the Toyota 4Runner and Land Rover Defender in its sights. You could throw in the Mercedes-Benz G-Class, except you rarely see one on the

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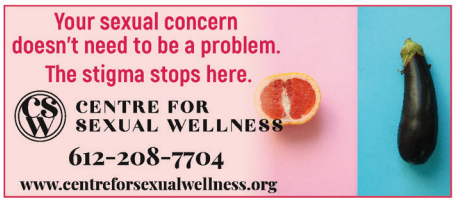

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Bronco Sport Interior. Photo by Randy Stern.

off-road trails in this country—not even at Spider Lake up in Chisago County or Appleton in western Minnesota.

The Bronco two- and four-door could be powered by a turbocharged 2.3-liter four-cylinder engine or a twin-turbocharged 2.7-liter V6. The four-wheel drive systems are more robust on the larger Bronco models, giving drivers a choice of terrain modes and an easy-to-use transfer case with a lower four-wheel drive ratio.

By the fall, there should be a choice of Broncos for every lifestyle. For the adventurous to the active consumer, Ford's strategy is to simply create a line of Broncos that will not only fit those lifestyles, but to meet every budget. Bronco Sport models will start from $26,820 for a base model with the turbocharged three-cylinder engine. The base two-door Bronco starts just $28,500. Those prices will reach into the $55,000 range for a fully-equipped four-door Bronco Wildtrak with the twin-turbocharged V6 engine and all the off-road goodies.

I recently had some wheel time in the Bronco Sport. My specific tester was the Badlands edition, which offered a level of off-road readiness from its optional 17-inch "steel-looking" alloy wheels, knobby tires, higher ground clearance, the turbocharged 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine, and an overall rugged look.

While this is not the Bronco we have been waiting impatiently for, the Bronco Sport Badlands model serves as an appetizer for those who cannot wait for their reservation to be fulfilled for the larger, more capable model.

Our history with off-road vehicles have always been centered on the Jeep CJ Series and Wrangler. They were symbols of LGBTQ liberation from the mid-1970s onward. We know that Stellantis supports our community inside and out of their North American operational base.

Bronco Logo on Infotainment Screen. Photo by Randy Stern.

Ford also supports our community as well. Perhaps they can see the kind of brand equity that would attract us to the Bronco lineup the way Jeep has done for us through these past four-plus decades.

Not so fast. Ford offers a good option against the venerable Wrangler—and, in consideration of the Bronco Sport, the Renegade and Compass. In turn, the Bronco lineup has sent its mainstream competitors back to the drawing board. Could we see a next generation Toyota 4Runner to step up against the Bronco? Or will Nissan listen to their dealers and enthusiasts for a new-generation Xterra to start playing in the same off-road park as the Bronco?

Is there a Ford Bronco (or Bronco Sport) in your future? They are definitely worth a test drive. ▮

OUR VOICES

JAMEZ SITINGS | BY JAMEZ L. SMITH

MANGINA MONOLOGUES I - V (TALKING OUT MY ASS)

MM-III

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"I was never in."

—

iiia) I've knowningly been attracted to males

since I was four years old…

sucking on my three-year old cousin's "tick-tack"

cuz I wanted to …

and it was fun.

—

iiib) In the sociopolitical context,

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